

## THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

Probably It Was Venus at Its Most Brilliant Stage.

Some time ago various newspapers of Europe and America contained the startling intelligence that the star which guided the "wise men" would again appear. This star was connected with that celebrated one which, three hundred and eighteen years ago, suddenly disappeared from the constellation of Cassiopeia, and it was found that this star of 1572 had previously appeared in the years 1264 and 945, and, if counted back, must have appeared in the year of the birth of Christ. If these facts were well established, we must certainly expect the star to appear again in our days. We should then see a new body in our heavens, entirely unlike any fixed star, to be seen in full daylight, which would in a short time again disappear. Every astronomer in recent times has asked a host of questions on the subject. It is true that the Star of Bethlehem will again appear? Is it periodical? Is its place in the sky appointed? The next question is: What really happened in 1572?

It was a few months after St. Bartholomew's Night, Tycho Brahe, the great observer of the stars, tells us that: "One evening, as I was watching the heavens in my accustomed manner, I saw, to my great astonishment, in the constellation Cassiopeia, a brilliant star of unusual clearness." This was on November 11, 1572. Three days after the star had been seen by Cornelius Gemma, who spoke of it as "the new Venus." In December of the same year it must have been seen, and in March, 1574, it had entirely disappeared, leaving no trace. As to the stars of 945 and 1264, we have no authority except that of the Bohemian astronomer, Regiomontanus, who mentions them, and the Chinese chroniclers, who watched all appearances in the sky with great care, do not speak of them. Even granting the appearance of these stars to have been a fact, their resemblance to the Star of Bethlehem is doubtful. It is true that by counting back from the year 630, 316 and 0; but the star should have appeared some time between 1880 and 1891.

With regard to the Star of Bethlehem there are five assumptions. (1) It had no existence, and the entire statement is a beautiful oriental fairy tale. (2) The fixed star, seen by the wise men, was Venus, at the time of its greatest splendor. (3) It was a periodical star like that of 1572. (4) The phenomenon was occasioned by a conjunction of planets. (5) It was a comet. Of these assumptions the most probable is the second. That it was a periodical star is scarcely likely, for Ptolemy and Ma-tuan-lin would have spoken of it. The fourth statement was suggested in 1826 by the German astronomer Ideler, and repeated by Encke in 1831. In the year 3, B. C., there were conjunctions of the planets Jupiter, Mars and Saturn on May 29, September 3 and December 5, but on none of these days were the planets nearer together than a degree, so that the wise men must have been very near-sighted to take them for one star. The fifth assumption is not to be considered, for people already knew how to distinguish a comet from other stars, and besides, we have no knowledge of a comet at that time. For all these reasons we have not the least occasion to expect the return of the Star of Bethlehem at the close of our century. And even if such a star should appear, it would simply be the twenty-sixth such case observed in historical times, and the interest attached to it would be purely astronomical.—Deutsch Review.

## A MOTH-CATCHING PLANT.

It Closes Its Jaws and Catches Its Victim.

A New Zealand correspondent suggests that the ravages of certain larvae, in some countries, might be greatly restricted by the introduction of the New Zealand moth-catching plant, "araugia albena." This plant, which is a native of southern Africa, was introduced to New Zealand quite accidentally about seven years ago, and since then it has been extensively propagated there, on account of its effective service as a killer of destructive moths. Wherever the climate is mild the plant is an exceedingly free grower; it twines and climbs with great luxuriance, and produces immense numbers of white or pinkish flowers, which have a very agreeable scent. These flowers attract innumerable moths. On a summer evening a hedge of araugia will be covered by a perfect cloud of moths, and in the morning there will not be a single flower that does not imprison one or two, and sometimes as many as four, of the various sizes of moths. The action of the "araugia" is purely mechanical. The calyx of the flower is rather deep, and the receptacle for its sweet juices is placed at its base. Attracted by the powerful scent and the prospect of honey, the moth dives down the calyx, and the protruding proboscis reaches the tempting food. But before it can do so the proboscis is snipped between two strong, hard, black pincers, which guard the passage, and once nipped there is no escape for the moth, which is held as in a vise, by the extended and retracted pincers. The "araugia" is so very slightly inserted between the pincers (only a minute fraction of an inch) that it apparently can not affect the sensitive organ of the plant, unless these may be the pincers themselves, whose actual contact may be necessary for production. Upon dissection, the pincers, even in their ordinary position, are invariably found to be almost in contact, the separating interval being apparent under a strong lens. It is therefore hard to understand why such a process as the destruction of a moth should be necessary to close this already minute gap. But, at all events, the thing is done effectively, and a plant of araugia covering a space of ten yards in length will destroy as many hundred moths every night, and consequently, prevent the ravages of fifty times as many larvae. It is, however, a singular fact that in New Zealand, where the plant has often been cultivated for the express purpose of destroying the detested codon moth ("carpocopa pomonella"), that will insect declines to enter the trap.—Detroit Free Press.

Julius Caesar is said to have been an epileptic. There is no doubt that he had fainting fits that lasted a considerable time and left him in a condition of great physical exhaustion.

## DOMESTIC CONCERNS.

**Baked Apples:** Peel and core, place in a deep dish. Fill the canisters with sugar. Let them bake until you can pass a straw through them easily. Whip the whites of two eggs, with one cup of white sugar, add four drops of extract of almond or twelve of lemon. Pour this meringue over the apples, return to the oven until it sets, or returns to the original color. The meringue is artistically and it will tempt the most languid appetite and is harmless for invalids.—Housekeeper.

**Quince Sauce:** One cupful of quince preserve, one of milk, one tablespoonful of corn-starch, half a cup of sugar. Mix the corn-starch with a little of the cold milk and put the remainder in the double boiler. When it boils stir in the corn-starch and cook ten minutes, then add the sugar and preserve, and mash fine. Cook ten minutes longer and rub through a strainer. This sauce is usually served cold, but when used with hot pudding, it, too, should be hot.—N. Y. Ledger.

An economical batter for fritters is made as follows, but it must always be made quite an hour before using: Work six ounces of dried flour into a paste with cold water and the yolk of one egg, add a quarter of a pint of warm water, and lastly the well-beaten white of egg. Slices of apple, pieces of rhubarb, stewed dates which have been well dried and floured, or any other fruit, may be used, and the fritters, if dipped into batter made from this recipe.—Leeds Mercury.

**Macaroni with Cheese:** Put pieces of macaroni one inch long into boiling water, add a little salt and let it boil for twenty-five minutes; then put into a colander to drain. Fill a deep earthenware baking dish with successive layers of macaroni and grated cheese. A very little cayenne pepper improves the flavor. After the dish is filled, lay on the top slices of fresh butter, and pour on enough milk to moisten the whole. Bake in a regularly heated oven for fifteen or twenty minutes, and send to the table immediately in the same dish.—Good Housekeeping.

**Tea Cakes:** Two cups of sugar, one cup of butter, four eggs well beaten, four teaspoonfuls of lemon extract, and two teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Cream butter and sugar, add the milk, the yolks of the eggs, and then the flour, add the stiffly-beaten whites of eggs and lastly the baking powder. I know some think this must always be incorporated with the flour, but I have used it the last thing over and over again, and know that it can be done. The above cakes are baked in patty-pans or simply dropped in spoonfuls.—Orange Judd Farmer.

## THOSE BIG BUTTONS.

They Will Be the Gayest of the Gay This Winter.

If buttons were gay in the times of our grandmothers, they are to be "screechers" now, in the words of the manufacturers, but while they are striking in color effects and hand painting, as well as in size—for some of them are even three inches in diameter—they are beautiful conceits. These large buttons are as light as a feather in weight, being composed of flange French gilt or silver and studded with jewels. Rhinestone buttons are the latest, and the winter stilet suits will have rows upon rows of them. The small ones will button the sleeves at the elbow and the larger ones will form a trimming down the front and side seams of the skirt.

Huge, haughty, pearl buttons, with heads of staring owls and those of horses, were noticed in the exhibit. It is in the enamel buttons that the French have displayed to perfection their love of bright colors. The foundation of the button is brass, upon which a heavy coat of enamel is placed, and the enamel is baked as is the case with hand-painted china. After the baking process has been gone through with the button passes into the hands of the artists, who decorate it in every conceivable style. It is here that the enormous cost of the button comes in, and a glance at a card of these enamel buttons reminds one of the case of precious ivory painted medallions in the art museum.

Enamel, rhinestone and pearl buttons are to head the fashion list, and she who can not turn over her ten-dollar bill for a dozen buttons might well consider herself among the antiquaries. While hooks and eyes are out of fashion, as serviceable articles, they are decidedly in it as a trimming, and the Paris hooks and eyes of heavy, rope-twisted brass and silver are as popular as ever, and will be used for the same purpose. They are four inches in length, and will be worn at the throat.—Boston Herald.

## A Womanly Art.

Sewing is the most womanly art. A woman is never more feminine than when she has a needle and thread in her hand. It is the right of every little girl to be taught to sew neatly, even if it costs the mother some self-sacrifice. Very few women are wholly exempt from the needle. On the contrary, almost every woman must take more or less care of her own wardrobe, even if she has no family responsibility. Machines can not sew up rips in gloves, replace buttons or mend. Some stitches must be taken, and how to sew neatly is an accomplishment quite as necessary, if not more so, to the happiness of a majority of women than any other. If a little girl be taught early how to use her needle sewing will soon become a sort of second nature to her.—Detroit Free Press.

**Boiled Turkey with Celery.** Chop half a head of celery very fine. Mix with one quart of bread crumbs, two salt and one teaspoonful of salt, half a teaspoonful of pepper, two heaping tablespoonfuls of butter and two eggs. Stuff the turkey with this, sew up and truss. Wring a large square of white cotton cloth out of cold water and dredge it thickly with flour. Pin the turkey in this and plunge into boiling water. Let it boil rapidly for fifteen minutes, then set back where it will simmer. Allow three hours for a turkey weighing nine pounds, and twelve minutes for every additional pound. Serve with celery sauce. The stuffing may be made the same as above, only instead of celery use oyster sauce and serve with oyster sauce.—Good Housekeeping.

The insurance company is unwilling to pay the loss on Middle's house that burned. "Why?" "There is a suspicion that he started the fire himself." "Pooh, how absurd; he can prove he didn't; he's a married man."—Inter-Ocean.

## AGRICULTURAL HINTS.

### DOWN IN THE WELL.

Two Useful Devices for Cooling All Kinds of Food.

I have used the contrivance shown at Fig. 1 for a number of years, with great satisfaction and safety. The diagram shows the box erected over the trap in the well floor. It is 4½ feet high by 2½ feet wide and 20 inches in depth, made of inch boards, with scantling 2 inches square in the corners to strengthen it. The windlass is of pine 6 inches in diameter, with ½-inch iron spindles in the ends. One spin-

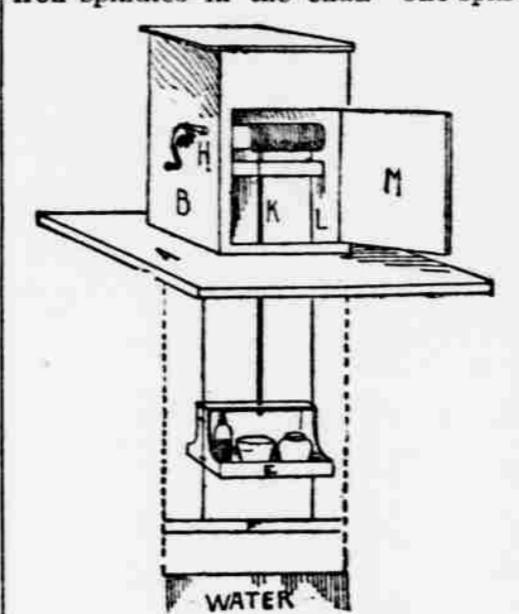


FIG. 1.—FOOD IN THE WELL.

dle has a ratchet, 4 inches in diameter, fastened on the crank end. The spindles are of round iron, squared and pointed at one end, and driven in the auger hole of slightly less size. The iron crank of the same size is of one piece, bent into shape and squared where it passes into the ratchet disk.

Three feet above the water is fastened into the wall of the well a locust sill 4x4, to which are fastened two No. 10 galvanized wires, at the proper distance apart. A crosspiece is fastened just under the windlass and a few inches from the center to let the rope pass freely. The wires pass through holes in this piece, and are drawn up very tightly, so as to keep the descending cage or box steady. The same piece may be placed parallel with the top one. The cage has two screw eyes

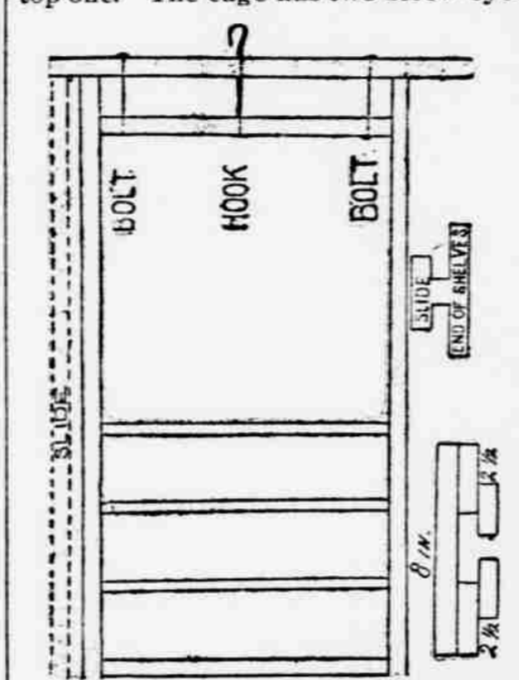


FIG. 2.—CAGE FOR PUTTING FOOD INTO A WELL.

on each side, 15 inches apart, through which the wires pass.

The cage containing the articles may be let down and let rest on the cross-stick, or, if the water should rise in the well, it may be held at any point by means of the ratchet and clamp. If there is a pump in the well, it may be placed to one side against the wall. The rope is fastened so as to be in the center when the box is up. With the above diagrams, any carpenter can easily erect one, and if he is at all bright, can do so without a diagram.

We were once located where, in warm weather, the only reasonable temperature to preserve meats, milk, etc., was down in a well having a stone pump stock in it. A grove made from a board, as shown at Fig. 2, was nailed to the pump stock. A slide was made to fit the groove and nailed to a board that served as one end-support of a tier of shelves. The shelves were made to suit the space in the well, and firmly fastened at the top to a board that completely covered the opening in the well covering or floor when the shelves were down in the well. A frame was placed over the well and a small block and tackle arrangement was used to raise and lower the shelves as desired. A windlass and catch were placed in a similar arrangement.—Rural New Yorker.

## POULTRY AND BEES.

If beginning in the poultry business be sure you get healthy stock or eggs from healthy stock.

BECKING is an important adjunct to horticulture and floriculture; much more so than is generally realized.

Ten or twelve hens well cared for will furnish more eggs than double the number of the same breed uncared for.

When wood ashes are strewn over the henhouse floor the manure will lose much of its ammonia by the mixture.

Like every other business, poultry keeping must begin in a modest way and increase as circumstances warrant.

There is no better work for the children than to make them feel the responsibility of caring for the poultry on the farm.

Though a pound of bone will give as good results as four pounds of corn, we are not to infer that nothing but bones should be allowed. Give grain and green food, but make the green bone part of the ration also.—Western Rural.

How to Prevent Chicken Cholera. This is the great scourge that annually devastates the flocks and renders poultry-raising almost an impossibility in some parts of the country. It is contagious, but is fostered and encouraged by filth. The symptoms are greenish droppings, great and intense thirst, a nervous, anxious expression, and general prostration. Burn all the bodies, thoroughly clean up and disinfect the premises. As a preventive of cholera, feed, twice a week, cornmeal dough, the water for mixing the dough being prepared by adding a teaspoonful of carbolic acid to each quart of water. Keep the drinking-water clean and change it frequently.—Prairie Farmer.

## HORSES IN WINTER.

They Must Be Taken Care of as Economically as Possible.

The farmer who has more horses than he can use to advantage during the winter must winter them as economically as possible. In doing this it is not a good plan to let them run down, but rather to feed and care for them, so as to keep them in good condition at a low cost. If the shelter is dry and warm with good bedding and the feeding is begun in good season in the fall, before the animals begin running down, they can be kept in good condition throughout the winter on good hay or corn fodder, with very little grain. This is especially true of the young, growing horses and those that are not at work. For this reason it will be found a good plan to select out one or more teams to do the necessary work. On most farms one good team is all that will be needed, especially after the fall plowing and the corn gathering are finished. In this way the cost of wintering may be greatly reduced.

It will pay to keep the team selected out for work well shod and to feed more or less grain daily, determining the quantity by their condition.

With those not at work, in addition to hay or fodder, it will be a good plan to give a little oilmeal and wheat bran, as this with their roughness makes a complete ration.

It is important to keep the animals as comfortable as possible. Every day that the weather will permit they should be turned out, as with horses especially daily exercise is necessary to the best health. All kinds of stock are more comfortable in the open air, shelter when the weather is inclement, but horses need a runout every day that the weather will permit.

By feeding, watering and grooming regularly, and using good care to keep them comfortable with good bedding and shelter, less feed will be required to keep the horses in good condition.

It is rather poor economy to stint the feed during the winter and allow the horses to run down, and then have to feed them up again in the spring. The better plan is to feed them enough to keep them in good condition all the time.

Average horses are cheap and it is necessary to winter them as economically as possible. When there are more than are needed, as is the case on many farms, never miss an opportunity to sell, if anything like a fair price can be had.—St. Louis Republic.

## GEESSE FOR MARKET.

A Branch of Poultry Raising Which Is Not Yet Overdone.

If not as popular as the turkey, the juicy meat of the geese commands it to a large class of buyers, and the market is seldom stocked with choice ones. It is safe to say that less improvement is made with the flocks of geese than with other kinds of poultry, and inbreeding is very common. Geese of the Toulouse or Embden breeds will weigh 25 pounds or more alive, and can be easily kept on any field that affords a good range, as geese subsist mostly on grass. Improvement should cost but very little, as geese live a great many years, and the same old pairs will bring out goslings year after year. It will be an advantage for farmers to use pure-bred ganders, and thus increase the size, which will not only add more weight, but increase the price per pound in market.

The finest flock of geese we have ever seen in Minnesota was the farm of Philip Dressell, in Le Sueur county. They were of the Toulouse breed. Mrs. Dressell said they would yield an average of a pound of feathers a year, were easily raised, could be kept in a yard or pasture, and an ordinary fence, and when full grown would dress from 15 to 20 pounds each. Mother Dressell said she did not raise them to sell, but for the purpose of supplying each new grandchild with a feather bed. Here is a branch of industry that is not overdone—a field of enterprise where many might find lucrative employment. There is a good demand for live geese feathers, and no immediate danger of glutting the market.—Colman's Rural World.

## SIMPLE DRINKING TANK.

One or More Should Be Made by Every Poultry Farmer.

The illustration of a drinking tank is from Mr. M. K. Barnum, Nebraska. It is simple, cheap and easily cleaned. It is a tin box about two inches deep and a foot square, with a detachable cover, with the corners of the cover cut away to permit the chickens to drink. The portions cut out may be small, so as to prevent chicks from getting in the water, but with such a shallow tank they cannot drown at all events. The cover also keeps dirt out and prevents evaporation of the water.

Mr. Barnum states that there is no patent on it, and he sends it as a gift to our readers. A larger and deeper tank on the same design may be used for fowls. The plan may also be adapted to a tight wooden box if desired.—Farm and Fireside.

Regarding Wheat-Fed Pork. The Farmer and Stockman says that hogs fed on wheat are not coming into the market, and they are not proving good sellers. Buyers discriminate against them, because they do not show the fine finish and ripe condition found in hogs fed on corn. Its conclusion is that hogs fed on wheat ought to be finished off on corn.

It may be, however, that it is only a question on account of wheat-fed hogs not presenting the appearance which buyers have learned to regard as the test of excellence. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and when the wheat-fed pork comes to the table we shall be able to judge.

There is nothing in wheat feeding to make poor pork, though if fed alone in too large amounts it will create fever and injure the quality of pork made from it.

The shrinkage of value of horses last year indicated that they were worth \$25,000,000, and the total loss in falling off of prices will no doubt aggregate \$50,000,000 since the commencement of the present depression of values.

## Highest of all in Leavening Power.—Latest U.S. Gov't Report

# Regal Baking Powder

ABSOLUTELY PURE

—It has long been a matter of discussion and controversy among the pious and the learned as to the situation of the terrestrial paradise, whence our first parents were exiled. This question has been put to rest by certain of the faithful in Holland, who have deeded six miles from Amsterdam. It may not, they observe, correspond in all respects to the description of the Garden of Eden, handed down from days of yore, but it comes nearer to their ideas of a perfect paradise than any other place on earth.—Irrving.

—With both the alligator and the crocodile the tail is the most formidable weapon. One stroke, fairly delivered, will break the legs of the strongest man.

**Weak as a Cat** Is a bad simile, for the cat is a very muscular animal for its size. But to be as weak as a cat is a very bad thing. It is a consequence of a wasting and protracted disease is to be weak indeed. Nothing in the way of a tonic promotes convalescence, hastens a gain in strength, like Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. It increases appetite, helps digestion and induces sleep. Nervous debility from it is an unspeakable benefit. It cures malaria, rheumatism, constipation.

**AFTER THE FIGHT.**—First Philistine—"Goliath had no business to fight, anyway. He was out of condition." Second Philistine—"Yes, didn't expect it to come off for five years. Did you have much on it?"—Life.

It is the business of the newspaper editor to make a long story short.—Texas Siftings.

## THE MARKETS.

NEW YORK, Dec. 3, 1894.

CATTLE—Native Steers \$4.00 @ \$5.25  
COTTON—Middling 52 1/2 @ 53 1/2  
SHEEP—Fair to Choice 2 1/2 @ 3 1/2  
WHEAT—No. 2 Red 80 1/2 @ 81 1/2  
OATS—No. 2 33 1/2 @ 34 1/2  
POPK—New Mess 13 1/2 @ 14 00

COTTON—Middling 52 1/2 @ 53 1/2  
BELLEVILLE—Shipping Steers 5 00 @ 5 1/2  
HOGS—Fair to Choice 4 1/2 @ 4 5/8  
SHEEP—Fair to Choice 2 1/2 @ 3 1/2  
FLOUR—Patents 2 50 @ 2 60  
FLOUR—Extra 2 00 @ 2 10  
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FLOUR—Extra 2 00 @ 2 10  
WHEAT—No. 2 Red 80 1/2 @ 81 1/2  
OATS—No. 2 33 1/2 @ 34 1/2  
POPK—New Mess 13 1/2 @ 14 00

COTTON—Middling 52 1/2 @ 53 1/2  
BELLEVILLE—Shipping Steers 5 00 @ 5 1/2  
HOGS—Fair to Choice 4 1/2 @ 4 5/8  
SHEEP—Fair to Choice 2 1/2 @ 3 1/2  
FLOUR—Patents 2 50 @ 2 60  
FLOUR—Extra 2 00 @ 2 10  
WHEAT—No. 2 Red 80 1/2 @ 81 1/2  
OATS—No. 2 33 1/2 @ 34 1/2  
POPK—New Mess 13 1/2 @ 14 00

COTTON—Middling 52 1/2 @ 53 1/2  
BELLEVILLE—Shipping Steers 5 00 @ 5 1/2  
HOGS—Fair to Choice 4 1/2 @ 4 5/8  
SHEEP—Fair to Choice 2 1/2 @ 3 1/2  
FLOUR—Patents 2 50 @ 2 60  
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WHEAT—No. 2 Red 80 1/2 @ 81 1/2  
OATS—No. 2 33 1/2 @ 34 1/2  
POPK—New Mess 13 1/2 @ 14 00